

Entertainment/Media Case Study

SBS

File transfer problems.
Solved.



Australia's Public Broadcaster, SBS, sends real time rich media around the world for on-the-spot event coverage using Accellion Secure File Transfer.

Background

SBS, (The Special Broadcasting Service) is Australia's multicultural and multilingual public broadcasting radio and television service, with program distribution in more languages than any other network in the world.

Sixty-eight languages are spoken on SBS Radio. SBS Television and online programs are offered in more than 60 languages and SBS New Media provides text and audio-on-demand services in more than 50 languages.

Every hour SBS Radio broadcasts in a different language. From one program to the next SBS Television provides extraordinary insights into the world's cultures and Australia's ethnic diversity, contributing to the cross-cultural understanding of all Australians – linguistically, sociologically and culturally.

Challenges

Similar to other companies in the broadcast media industry, SBS is pressed to exchange increasingly large media and business files within the organization and with outside parties. The program and creative groups work closely with contracted content producers, collaborating and receiving videos and promotional materials about their shows on an on-going basis.

Anne Jones, Business Analyst in the TV and Sales Group at SBS, explains the challenges this presents. "It was a major problem communicating with outside producers," she says. "It could take days and entail expensive shipping charges, especially for rush shipments, to receive materials to meet our broadcast schedules."

Email was the preferred means for SBS personnel to send files. However, workers were limited in the size of attachments they could send due to size limitations imposed by email administrators at SBS and outside users' organizations. A very large file, such as a media file, simply couldn't be transmitted via email.

SBS set up an FTP server so that employees could send and receive large files, but it was underutilized for a number of reasons. First of all, users found sending a file via FTP a cumbersome multi-step process. In

addition, some users couldn't access the FTP server through their firewall. For the IT department, FTP meant additional overhead to set up and manage user accounts, deploy the client software, maintain the server, and troubleshoot connectivity problems. File security was another concern. Once a file was on the FTP server, it was difficult to control who accessed the file.

Some SBS employees turned to alternative methods for file transfer, including standalone broadband connections with an ISP-issued email address, free third party hosted file transfer, CDs sent via courier service or decomposing files into small chunks that could be sent separately through email. None of these options was ideal, especially for sending proprietary or confidential information and all added time or cost.

"This was getting frustrating for everyone," states Jones. "Our people were pulling their hair out for a workable file transfer solution."

A task force consisting of business and IT personnel set out to solve the problem with a solution that would work for everyone both inside and outside the company, preferably through integration with the email system. The task force charged with finding this solution outlined the process they wanted, including email integration, security and speed.

"We love the Accellion solution. It has been exceptionally well received, and is being used extensively by many areas within SBS. We have had very few user issues or queries about how to use it, so from a support perspective, it is fantastic."

Anne Jones,
Business Analyst-TV and
Sales Technology and Distribution,
SBS Corporation

This led to the development of a set of functional and technical requirements. The task force divided the requirements into “must have” and “nice to have” categories, as follows:

“MUST HAVE” REQUIREMENTS	WHY NEEDED
Attachment is delivered via email, but doesn’t clog email	Email is main record of the sending and receiving of information – application is always open
Service can be used by external parties to send information to SBS users	A significant percentage of large file traffic is inbound – ensures a total solution
No client software install required	Ensures that this solution can be used by all external parties without IT intervention
Can operate through ‘normal’ firewall configurations	Ensures that this solution can be used by all external parties without IT intervention
Secure	Some of the information exchanged could be confidential
Scalable	May need to increase capacity for additional users/files
Intuitive user interface	No training required

“NICE TO HAVE” REQUIREMENTS	WHY NEEDED
User can send via email client	Productivity – single step process
Known cost	Need to be able to reliably cost out the solution
Proven in market place	Know it works for similar organizational requirements
Minimal setup required	We can install and get going with minimum cost and changes to our infrastructure
Minimal IT administration overhead (i.e., set and forget)	Greater the need to administer, more likelihood of solution failing from user perspective

Solution

The task force spent months exploring the Internet searching for a solution to the email and large file transfer problem. They looked at several options, including simply removing email attachment restrictions, before settling on the Accellion Secure File Transfer solution. SBS found this solution to be the only one that met all of their “must have” key requirements.

Jones calls the Accellion appliance “a perfect solution.” “It’s brilliant!” exclaimed Jones. “This appliance was a breeze to install. It took little time and effort on our part, and Accellion’s customer support was very responsive when we had questions.”

Ease of use is the main reason that SBS is so pleased with the Accellion file transfer system. “Within two weeks, all who used it would really struggle to remember how bad it was before we installed the Accellion solution,” says Jones. “It is so easy to use, it just seems natural.”

So far the biggest users are the people on the creative side –in-house and vendors’ content producers. They exchange large files for collaboration and proofing on promotional materials and the actual show videos, from rough cuts to final versions. These files can now be sent securely through the web to SBS from anywhere in the world.

For example, Dateline (SBS’s premier current affairs program) reporters have been using the Accellion appliance to send video/audio files from remote locations. The team covering the Tour de France used it extensively to send back highlights’ packages to the SBS web team in Australia. The Publicity team uses it constantly to forward Media Kits and associated still photography to Australian Media outlets and the Marketing/Sales area is using it daily to exchange material with external advertising and other creative agencies and sales partners. In July, 2007 the team covering the World Athletics Championships in Osaka, Japan used it to exchange material in real time with their colleagues in Australia.

“We also like that we can custom brand the Accellion file transfer solution with the SBS brand,” says Jones. As a public broadcasting network with many different services and languages, the branding webpage feature that Accellion provides is a critical part of the success of the solution. It is important to share content with third parties for documentaries and dramas (rough cuts, visuals, graphics, etc.), and also there is much two-way communication with the media outlets and stations that actually put on the shows. Every time a file is sent through Accellion it is sent on a page with the SBS logo, adding greatly to the awareness of how much SBS is a part of the community and national identity.

“This solution has transformed how we do business,” says Jones. “We now have a much faster turnaround time on all the media and business files we send and receive. I have to say, we love this solution!”

BENEFITS

- Reduced the time and cost to receive media content developed by outside producers
- Reduced turnaround time for content and promotional collaboration
- Eliminated costly and insecure methods of transferring files
- Reduced the operational burden on the enterprise email system
- Reduced the need for IT and help desk support to send and receive large files
- Improved the public image of the company

Specifications

Australia's Special Broadcasting Service	
Deployed since	December 2007
# of Appliances	1
Location of Appliances	Sydney, Australia
# of Users	230 Internal Unlimited External
LDAP/AD directory integration	No
Web Interface	Yes
Email plug-in	Lotus Notes